

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

IDS

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge the IDS electronically filed on October 23, 2008.

Priority Document

The Examiner has indicated that none of certified copies of the priority documents have been received. However, Applicant respectfully notes that the present application is a national phase application, and the Examiner should have received the certified copies of the priority documents from the International Bureau. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner receive the same and acknowledge the priority.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-24 were pending in this application. By way of this reply, claim 25 has been newly added, and claims 1, 14, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 25 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 25.

Claim Amendments

Independent claim 25 has been newly added. No new matter has been added, as support for new independent claim 25 may be found, for example, in original claims 1, 14, and 15 and paragraphs [0132]-[0146] of the publication of the Specification. Accordingly, claims 1, 14, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2, 3, 9-11, 13, 18-22, and 24 have been amended to be consistent with new independent claim 25 and for clarification. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Objection(s) to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings. Applicant respectfully disagrees. However, in the interest of expediting prosecution, the term “main rail” in the claims has been deleted, and the term “groove (70a; 17a)” in the claims has been replaced with the term “groove,” which is clearly shown, for example, in Figure 28 as an element 170a in view of the Examiner’s objections. Therefore, the drawings now comply with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.84(p)(4), 1.83(a). Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-3, 9-11, 13-15, 18-22, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 14, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Further, in view of the rejection, independent claim 25 have been newly added, and claims 2, 3, 9-11, 13, 18-22, and 24 have been amended for clarification and to depend, directly or indirectly, from new independent claim 25. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication No. 1-151681 to Furumoto (hereinafter “Furumoto”). As explained above, independent claim 25 has been newly added, and claims 1, 14, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to new independent claim 25, the rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth below.

MPEP § 2131 makes it clear that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found either expressly or inherently in a single prior art reference. Applicant respectfully asserts that Furumoto does not show or suggest all of the limitations of new independent claim 25.

One or more embodiments of the claimed invention are directed to a guide apparatus for guiding a movement of a plurality of doors. Referring to the specification as an example, the

guide apparatus guides a movement of a plurality of doors 3 with respect to a main body 1. The guide apparatus includes a plurality of rotatable rails 81. Each of the plurality of rotatable rails 81 includes a supporting surface 82a, an auxiliary track 82b, and an additional track 81x that is parallel to the auxiliary track 82b. At the first rotation position of the rotatable rail 81, the roller 88 is positioned on the supporting surface 82a. On the other hand, at the second rotation position of the rotatable rail 81, the roller 88 is positioned on the auxiliary track 82b, and the auxiliary track 82b of one door 3 becomes continuous with an additional track 81x of a rotatable rail 81 of another door 3. As a result, the rotatable rail 81 at the first rotation position can support one door 3 at the set position and guide another door 3 from the preparation position to the non-set position (*see, e.g.*, publication of the Specification, paragraphs [0132]-[0146]).

Accordingly, new independent claim 25 recites, in part, (i) guiding a movement of a plurality of doors with respect to a main body between a set position and a preparation position that is in front of or behind said set position and between said preparation position and a non-set position positioned at a side of said preparation position, (ii) a plurality of rotatable rails having a length approximately equal to a width of said plurality of doors and arranged in a line extending horizontally in a left and right direction, and (iii) when one of two adjacent ones of said plurality of rotatable rails is in said second rotation position, said auxiliary track of said one of two adjacent ones of said plurality of rotatable rails is continuous with said additional track of the other of said two adjacent ones of said plurality of rotatable rails in said first rotation position.

In contrast, Furumoto fails to show or suggest at least the above limitations (i)-(iii). In fact, Furumoto shows a *single* panel 4. Also, Furumoto shows a *single* rotatable rail 6b and a single fixed rail 6a. Further, Furumoto shows that an auxiliary track of a rotatable rail 6b

becomes continuous with the fixed rail 6a at one position of the rotatable rail 6b, not an additional track of another rotatable rail at another position of the rotatable rail 6b (*see* Furumoto, Figures 1-3).

Accordingly, Furumoto fails to show or suggest at least the limitations, (i) guiding a movement of a *plurality of doors* with respect to a main body between a set position and a preparation position that is in front of or behind said set position and between said preparation position and a non-set position positioned at a side of said preparation position, (ii) a *plurality of rotatable rails* having a length approximately equal to a width of said plurality of doors and arranged in a line extending horizontally in a left and right direction, and (iii) when one of two adjacent ones of said *plurality of rotatable rails* is in said second rotation position, said *auxiliary track of said one of two adjacent ones of said plurality of rotatable rails is continuous with said additional track of the other of said two adjacent ones of said plurality of rotatable rails* in said first rotation position.

In view of above, Furumoto fails to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25. Thus, independent claim 25 is patentable over Furumoto. Dependent claims are allowable for at least same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furumoto. As explained above, independent claim 25 has been newly added. To the extent that

this rejection may still apply to new independent claim 25, the rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth below.

As discussed above, Furumoto fails to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25. Thus, independent claim 25 is patentable over Furumoto. Claims 3 and 9, directly dependent from independent claim 25, are allowable for at least same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furumoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,926,342 to Pommerer ("Pommerer"). As explained above, independent claim 25 has been newly added. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to new independent claim 25, the rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth below.

As discussed above, Furumoto fails to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25.

Pommerer fails to supply that Furumoto lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Pommerer is relied upon by the Examiner merely to provide details, such as a support bracket as claimed. In fact, Pommerer shows a *single* door 12 (*see* Pommerer, Figure 1). Also, Pommerer is completely silent with respect to a plurality of rotational rails having an auxiliary track and an additional track as claimed (*see* Pommerer, Figures 1-6).

In view of above, Furumoto and Pommerer, whether taken separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25. Thus, independent claim 25 is patentable over Furumoto and Pommerer. Claims 10-11, directly dependent from independent claim 25, are allowable for at least same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 13-15, 18-22, and 24, stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furumoto and Pommerer in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,644,690 to Caimi ("Caimi"). As explained above, independent claim 25 has been newly added, and claims 14 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to new independent claim 25, the rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth below.

As discussed above, Furumoto and Pommerer, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25.

Caimi fails to supply that Furumoto and Pommerer lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Caimi is relied upon by the Examiner only to provide details, such as a biasing member as claimed. In fact, Caimi shows that the first door 1 is moved both in a forward and backward direction and in a left and right direction, while the second door 2 is only moved in a left and right direction (*see* Caimi, Figure 4). Thus, it would be clear to a skilled artisan both the first and the second door 1 and 2 are not moved in a forward and backward direction and in a left and right direction. Also, Caimi is completely silent with respect to a plurality of rotational rails having an auxiliary track and an additional track as claimed (*see* Caimi, Figures 1-6).

In view of above, Furumoto, Pommerer, and Caimi, whether taken separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claim 25. Thus, independent claim 25 is patentable over Furumoto and Pommerer. Claims 13-15, 18-22, and 24, directly dependent from independent claim 25, are allowable for at least same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591, Reference No. 12088/039001.

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Respectfully submitted,

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